

## Chapter 3 An Inferior Substitute

The next day, Stephen was awakened by a commotion outside.

Frowning, he opened his eyes. As expected, he still couldn't see anything. He should have stopped hoping for a miracle anyway. Stephen groped his way out of bed. The soreness in the back of his neck reminded him that last night wasn't a dream.

He gritted his teeth in anger. How dare that woman lay her hands on him? She was looking for trouble!

"The Jones family really had the nerve to send such an ugly woman to deceive our family. They must've thought that I'm an old lady with one foot in the grave! Send this woman back to where she belongs at once. Tell the Jones that if they don't pay back the money by today, I'll come after them!"

Stephen could hear every word coming from the courtyard clearly as the glass door to his balcony was open. It seemed his grandmother, Elizabeth Anderson, had discovered that the Jones family sent an inferior substitute to be Stephen's wife.

Since becoming blind, Stephen had lost all interest in other people and events in the outside world. But strangely, he felt an unexpected desire to witness the humiliation and ridicule the shameless woman would face.

Stephen got up and confidently made his way to the balcony, as he was familiar with the layout of his room. When he got there, he heard the woman pleading for mercy.

"Madam Elizabeth, please don't send me back! My stepmother will kill me!" Yvonne grabbed onto Elizabeth's leg, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Don't try to fool me with your acting! Look at yourself in the mirror and see what a monster you are! You don't even deserve to step on our property!" Elizabeth gave Yvonne a kick.

She'd been utterly shocked when Yvonne appeared this morning and greeted her. When Yvonne started crying, she looked even more horrifying.

The intersecting scars on her left cheek looked like centipedes crawling on her skin!

Yvonne fell to the ground and wiped her tears. "Madam Elizabeth, as long as you spare my family and I, I'm willing to work like a slave for the Anderson family. I'll never dream of becoming the mistress of the family! I didn't want to help them deceive you, but I had no choice. If I didn't obey their wishes, I would've been horribly tortured! I'm truly innocent!" She cried and sobbed uncontrollably.

Stephen's temples throbbed as he listened in on the conversation. Was this the same woman from last night? He distinctly remembered her as a cheeky and reckless woman. There had been no sign that she was forced into this marriage.

Soon, he realized that Yvonne was merely putting on an act. Although her words made it sound like she was on Thomas' side, she was actually shifting the blame to him!

"Furthermore, Stephen and I already..." Yvonne buried her face in her hands, as if she were overwhelmed with sorrow. "If you send me back now, what am I to do? My whole life will be ruined!"

Everyone present was shocked.

Stephen clenched his fists. Everything that came out of this woman's mouth was a lie!

Elizabeth was also taken aback by her declaration.

It was true. The maids had informed her that Yvonne had stayed in Stephen's room all night.

Since Stephen lost his sight, Elizabeth had been extremely worried about his marriage prospects, hoping that he would at least have a child to continue the bloodline. However, every single woman she brought to Stephen was thrown out of the room without exception. Only this ugly woman had managed to stay the night.

Elizabeth furrowed her brows. Did her grandson's taste in women change after he lost his sight?

At this moment, Charles' second wife, Camille, approached her and said, "Mother, I think this miserable child looks pitiful. Why don't we keep her for a few days?"

"No! This matter cannot be left as it is!" Elizabeth immediately rejected the suggestion.

"Of course, we can't let Thomas off the hook. We still have to settle things with him." Camille stared at Yvonne and lowered her voice even further as she said, "Maybe she really knows how to take care of Stephen?"

Elizabeth wasn't fond of the idea. She glared at Yvonne as if she wanted to swallow her whole. Yvonne cowered in a corner, trembling like a leaf.

"Since she was brought here to be my wife, I'll handle her myself." Stephen's icy voice drifted from the balcony, interrupting the commotion.

Everyone looked up, but Stephen had already turned around and walked back into his room.

Elizabeth relented when she heard Stephen's decision. She waved her hand for the maids to take Yvonne back to Stephen's room. Then she turned to Camille and ordered, "Find out everything about that ugly creature's background."